

A discourse on

LOKADHAMMA

by

The Venerable Mahāsi Sayādaw

of

Burma



An English Rendering by U On Pe (Tet Toe)

Buddha Sāsana Nuggaha Organization
Mahasi Translation Committee
Rangoon

AN ENGLISH RENDERING OF
THE VENERABLE MAHASI SAYADAW'S
DISCOURSE ON

LOKADHAMMA

Foreword by U Min Swe

Translated from Burmese by U On Pe (Tet Toe)

*First printed and published in the Socialist
Republic of the Union of Burma,
October 1980*

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First Published 1980

Religious Publication Permission

No. 1617

13831

First Impression 1000

cover by – Sakarwa press

(Dhammadāna)

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Published by - U Min Swe (Exemption No. 612)
Secretary, Buddha Sāsana Nuggaha
Organization.
No. 16, Hermitage Road, Kokkine,
Rangoon, Burma.

Printed by - U Tin Maung (0256-Perm)
Sarpay-paungku Press, No. 90, AB,
Wayzayantar Street, (8) Yat-kwet,
South Okkalapa, Rangoon.

THE IGNORANT

The Ignorant cling to names, signs and ideas; as their minds move along these channels they feed on multiplicities of objects and fall into the notion of an ego-soul and what belongs to it; they make discriminations of good and bad among appearances and cling to the agreeable. As they thus cling there is a reversion to ignorance, and karma born of greed, anger and folly, is accumulated. As the accumulation of karma goes on they become imprisoned in a cocoon of discrimination and are thenceforth unable to free themselves from the round of birth and death.

(Extract from the Lankavatara Sutta)

ON GETTING ANGRY

“My friend, who has retired from the world and art angry with this man, tell me what it is you are angry with? Are you angry with the hair of the head, or with the hair of the body, or with the nails, etc.? Or are you angry with the earthy element in the hair of the head and the rest? Or are you angry with the watery element, or with the fiery element, or with the windy element in them? What is meant by a person is only the five groups, the six organs of sense, and the six sense-consciousness. With which of these are you angry?”

For a person who has made the above analysis, there is no hold for anger, any more than there is a grain of mustard-seed on the point of an awl, or for a painting in the sky.”

“Visuddhi Magga”

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FOREWORD

This book originally written in Burmese by the Venerable Mahasi Sayadaw is one of the popular Suttas, translated and published in English version. The translation is undertaken by U On Pe (Pen-name Tet Toe), a well known writer and scholar in English language, who is a member of the Translation Committee of Mahasi Sāsana Yeiktha.

The Sutta Pitaka consists mainly of discourses delivered by the Buddha Himself on various fitting occasions and form one of the three Baskets of the Law known as "Tipitaka." It is like a book of prescriptions as the sermons embodied therein were expounded to suit the different occasions and the temperaments of various persons.

Out of a series of Suttas which the Venerable Mahasi Sayadaw has delivered expounding the Buddha's doctrine and teachings, a number of selected Suttas have been translated in English particularly for the benefit of foreign readers and generally for all people who are interested in Buddhist philosophy. The choice of selection was done by the Translation Committee of the Buddha Sāsana Nuggaha Organization with the final blessing

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of the Venerable Mahasi Sayadaw. Other famous Suttas translated into English language are in process of publication.

THE VENERABLE MAHASI SAYADAW.

Born in the year 1904 at Seikkhun, a well-known and prosperous village, well-known for its handloom industry in the historically renowned district of Shwebo in Upper Burma, Bhaddanta Sobhana, popularly known as the Venerable Mahasi Sayadaw, is regarded as a pre-eminent teacher of Vipassanā Meditation both in Burma and abroad. He ranks among the foremost for his Sīla, Samādhi and Paññā.

Through constant practice and perseverance since his first initiation into priesthood at the age of twelve, the Venerable Mahasi Sayadaw, Mahathera, Sāsana-dhaja-sirī-pavara dhammācariya, Agga Mahā Paṇḍita, Chaṭṭha-saṅgīti-pucchaka, has risen to great heights as an illustrious teacher and guide in the field of practical vipassanā. The Venerable Sayadaw has taken pains to write in common language for easy understanding by his disciples in general the highly difficult philosophy of dhamma with particular emphasis on the practical vipassanā exercise as to how they should begin and then proceed step by step for the ultimate attainment of Wisdom (paññā).

In translating the selected Suttas into English, the Translation Committee has

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put its best efforts to maintain the essence contained in the sutta and the scholarly accuracy of its author and also to make it a readable translation. All these books on dhamma are couched in common linguistic style and in plain terms for the benefit of the ordinary laymen to grasp and fully understand the true concept of the profound Buddhist philosophy.

This present book "Lokadhamma" will, it is hoped, serve as a useful guide, and prescribe a way from the crushing miseries of this transitory life to real happiness. It points out an easy method of restraining all the ignorant cravings and blind urges through the medium of simple meditational practice which will provide one with requisite stability of mind. The basic truth about what we call life is made up of mind and matter (Nāma-Rūpa) brought about by the law of Kamma. It is accordingly prone to decay, old age, disease, and finally death. The life of mortals is full of sufferings, difficult and problematic. To tackle with Lokadham which is inevitable, and to be able to withstand misery and minimize anger, sorrows, frustrations, desires and perplexities to which men are subjected, this book of dhamma should prove to be useful.

The Venerable Mahasi Sayadaw has quoted a number of instances and cited therein a few relevant stories from the teaching of Buddha

in a simple and interesting way so as to convince the reader that no sufferings befall the man who is not attached to Nāma-Rūpa and that the wise who control their temper and thoughts will be able to withstand the onslaughts of Lokadhamma the inevitable ups and downs of life. It clearly indicates that the uninformed man does not possess true knowledge and serenity of mind whereas the wise man guards his thoughts and purges himself of all the vices of the mind under any circumstances in the vicissitudes of life.

May you all be able to restrain yourself according to Dhamma and gain happiness.

Min Swe

SECRETARY

Buddha Sāsana Nuggaha Organization
Mahasi Sāsana Yeiktha.
Rangoon.

An English Rendering of
The Venerable Mahasi Sayadaw's Discourse on

LOKADHAMMA

(13th April 1965)

THE THINGYAN FESTIVAL

Today is the beginning of Thingyan Festival which marks the change of years from 1326 B.E. (Burmese Era) to 1327 B.E. "Thingyan" is a Burmese term which is derived from the Sanskrit *Sankranta*, meaning "change" or "transfer". The sun changes its course at the end of a twelve-month period, and the Burmese people celebrate the change of years. This festival marks the change from the Burmese month of *Tabaung*, the last month on the Burmese calendar to *Tagu*, the First month of the Burmese year.

The Thingyan Festival was "invented" by ancient *ponnas* or brahmins who annually issued a statement of forecast for the forthcoming year. In such statement, usually published as a bulletin, called *Thingyan-sa* in Burmese, it is stated that *Thagyamin* the King of *Devas*, would come down to the human world riding a bullock or some

animal. In fact, the King of the *devas* never came down to the human abode; that is what the brahmins invented. According to traditional beliefs, however, the planet Sun changes its course on its revolution around the world. This, of course, is just a traditional assumption. According to modern science, the earth revolves around the sun and it is believed that on such a day as today every year the earth completes one round. Anyway, today is the beginning of Thingyan Festival for the Burmese to mark the end of the old year and the beginning of the new one.

During the time of the Buddha, in middle India, the time marking the end of year was the full moon day of Tazaungmon, the eighth month on the Burmese calendar falling usually in early November. You all know that the year on the European calendar ends on 31st December. It is a fixed date, unlike the Burmese date of the end of year. In the case of the Burmese date, astrologers have to work out to fix it. They announce the date of the beginning of the Festival of Thingyan which usually extends to three days, at the end of which the Burmese New Year begins.

Burmese Buddhists usually observe this occasion by keeping sabbath, or if they cannot keep sabbath, and some don't, they keep their minds clean. They want to welcome the new year with a clean mind. It would be better for every

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one of the Burmese laity to keep sabbath during Thingyan Festival, and if possible on the New Year Day, too. Keeping sabbath and keeping one's mind clean is like sending off an old friend and welcoming a new visiting friend cheerfully. Not only is it advisable to keep one's mind clean but it is also desirable that one should give charity and do the meditation. That would make for a greater cleanliness, and such a frame of mind could ward off evils and disasters that the new year may bring. Praying for one's own welfare and peace and also peace and welfare for the whole world at the beginning of the year is commendable. As for us, we contribute to this auspicious occasion by delivering sermons to the people. We have been delivering sermons on every sabbath day. I have given you a discourse on the Sakka Pañā Sutta. Today, however, I am going to give you a discourse on a subject which is concerned with everybody, every being, which they should understand and practise. It is a discourse on "Lokadhamma".

WHAT IS LOKADHAMMA?

The term "Lokadham" (in Burmese) is a derivative of the Pali "Lokadhamma". "Loka" comprises three divisions: *Sattaloka*, *Sankhāraloka* and *Okāsaloka*. *Sattaloka* means "all *sattavā* or beings"; each being is indeed one *loka*. That is, each man, woman or animal is a *loka*.

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Okāsaloka means the abodes, or places of residence or habitats of beings. So we have the human world, the world of *pevas*, the world of *brahmās*, the world of denizens of the nether regions of misery: hell, animal kingdom, the abode of *petas*. The abodes of animals and *petas* are on the earth; the abodes of *devas* and *brahmās* are celestial worlds.

Sankhāraloka means the continuous activities of the physical and mental elements of beings as well as the changes and movements of inanimate things such as the earth, trees, forests, mountains, abodes, water, air, fire, etc.....

In a word, *Sankhāraloka* constitutes all evolutionary processes of *nāmarūpa*.

The discourse I am giving today relates to the *loka* of sentient beings, *sattavā*. So *loka* in this context means "beings" and *dhamma* means the "law". *Lokadhamma* or *Lokadham* means the natural consequences that every being has to receive and contend with. There are two suttas for the sermon on *Lokadhamma* that the Buddha had delivered: the short *sutta* and the long one. I am now quoting from the Pāli original of the long *sutta*.

THE PALI TEXT FROM THE LOKADHAM SUTTA

Atthime bhikkhave lokadhammā lokam anu pari vuttanti; lokosa ime attha lokadhamme anu pari vuttati.

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“Bhikkhus, the eight manifestations of *lokadham* are always following all the *sattavās*, otherwise called *loka*, and all the *sattavās* or the *loka* are also following *lokadham*.”

There are eight manifestations of *lokadham*, and these are always following *loka* or the beings. If a man walks in the sun, his shadow always follows him; he cannot prohibit it from following him. So, like the shadow, these laws of *lokadham* are following all beings. In the same way, beings are always chasing *lokadham*.

EIGHT LAWS OF LOKADHAM

“What are the eight ? *Lābho*, lucrativeness; *alābho*, unlucrativeness, *yāso*, having a large retinue, *ayāso*, having no helpers or servants, *nindā*, being abused and criticised, *pasamsā*, receiving praises, *sukha*, having comfort and happiness, *dukkha*, suffering misery.”

These eight laws are in pairs; *lābho* and *alābo*; *yāso* and *ayāso*; *nindā* and *pasamsā*; *sukha* and *dukkha*. Of them, four are good ones and the other four bad ones. Of course, people like the good four and dislike the bad four.

Now, what is *lābho* ? It is getting pleasant and desirable things, useful things; for human beings, gold, silver, diamond, gems, cattle, elephants, horses, food, dresses, vehicles, home, land, etc. To get these things either by hard work, or without trying, is good; the more, the better. To be successful in business and

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other means of living is to be endowed with *lābha* or wealth. For monks, getting the four essential things, that is to say, meals, robes, monastery and medicine, is good.

Conversely, *alābho* means being deprived of these things or failure in business. It is to be regretted if one tries to get wealth and fails. One will probably deplore that one does not get it while others do. More deplorable than that is to lose what one has already got. There are five enemies or destructive forces in life, and because of these enemies, one's property may be lost or destroyed.

In this pair of circumstances, getting wealth is liked by one and all. It does not matter whether one gets it by fair means or foul. Fools do not mind getting it by foul means. Well, nobody likes being denied what has been longed for or hankered after; neither does the modern man nor the ancient. Everybody dislikes being reduced to destitution.

Yāsa means having a mate, friends and companions, followers and retinue, and a lot of people upon whom one can exert one's authority and influence.

Ayāsa means being deprived of these favours.

In this pair, too, everybody likes having a full compliment of companions and followers. First, one remains single; then marries, then

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gets children. One moves about in society and has friends, associates and followers upon whom one can exert one's influence. One likes such circumstances, and would welcome more people around one. If one is deprived of them one will feel dejected. When one fails to get the friendship of those one should have made friends with, or loses one's servants or followers, one will surely feel unhappy.

Then comes *nindā* which means being under fire, criticised, ridiculed. And *pasamsā* which means being praised and highly esteemed. In this third pair, too, one would not like being abused, ridiculed or criticised. One may not deserve such ridicule but one would not surely like it anyway. One cannot tolerate ridicule. If one doesn't have patience and a forgiving spirit one feels hurt especially when the criticism is a deserved one. It is like letting a stick fall on a sore; it hurts very much. The criticised one feels gravely hurt at the thought that he should have been publicly ridiculed.

As for those having a good mind, if the criticism is a deserved one, they would have enough patience to receive it and ponder upon their faults with equanimity, Yet nobody likes being criticised or ridiculed. Nobody; neither the young nor the old. As to *pasamsā*, meaning getting praises, everybody likes it. Even if the praises were undeserved and mere flattery, one would accept them with a smile.

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WEALTH AND HAPPINESS IMPORTANT

The fourth pair is wealthiness and destitution. Of this, wealthiness is of two kinds, material wealthiness and mental wealthiness. In other words, prosperity and happiness. These two are important. If one were endowed with both, one would not need anything else. People are always striving to get them. So a wise man of old said, "All the people around you have been hankering after wealth, and thus are extending the sea of distress because nobody can really achieve his purpose." His remark is apt. Material wealthiness and mental wealthiness, added together as prosperity, is what people hanker after and are taking great pains to get it.

To be free from physical pains and discomfort and to get the good things of life is very important indeed. So people are making endless efforts to obtain it. To be free from all sorts of unhappiness and to be happy for all the time is very important, and people are striving for it.

Let us look at the problem, What is material welfare, and what is mental wellbeing? Let's call the two things together prosperity. What is prosperity in the human world and what is prosperity in the celestial world? They are of the same kind. To be able to achieve it, one must have several supporting factors. One must have prosperity, benefits of all sorts, good food and a comfortable home, attendants, etc. If one

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is fully equipped with all these accessories to prosperity, one will probably be wealthy and happy. If there is anything lacking, then some sort of distress might occur. But can anyone be "fully endowed" with all these things? There is no one in the world who is so endowed. Striving to get these things, one has to undergo an assortment of troubles, and the "sea of distress" is ever widening.

Distress comprises physical discomfort and unhappiness. Physical discomfort embraces physical pains, diseases, beatings, tortures, accidents, etc., and these are like the scorching of the sun of fire. Nobody likes them, of course; everybody fears them. Then there is mental unhappiness of all kinds, such as, annoyance, anxiety, dejection, sadness and other kinds of mental uneasiness. Of course, nobody likes them; everybody fears them. There are also verbal abuse, ridicule, tongue-lashing by others which make a person unhappy. There are occasions, too, when people are deprived of the thing or things they love and take delight in; such privation makes for unhappiness. Nobody wants to have such unpleasantness; they are afraid of it. So people have to be alert to avoid such occasions.

EVERYBODY LIKES THEM

Now I have completed the description of the eight laws of *Lokadham*. As has been said before, everybody likes the good four and dislikes the bad

four. But whatever is liked or disliked, everybody has to take in all the eight; nobody can get away from any of them, nobody can flee from them all.

THE GOOD AND THE BAD GO TOGETHER

Sometimes one can have what one wants to have; one can achieve one's purpose. Sometimes, too, one may not get what one wants to have, or one may lose what one has already had. Even if some things remain with one all one's life, one has to leave them when one dies. So when one has *lābha*, one will also have *alābha* which follows it in its wake.

One may have mates, friends, companions and followers at one time; one may be deprived of them at other times. Even the Buddha who had a large following was sometimes obliged to live through Lent alone. All the other people cannot hope to be always well attended to; at last when one dies, one has to leave all the attendants. So *yāsa* is always accompanied by *ayāsa*.

One is praised because one deserves praise. It is good to get praise but one has to work hard to deserve it. Only after one has striven hard does one get praise, real praise, not flattery, and one is obliged to go on working hard to keep up the esteem. Even then, if someone misunderstands or hates one, or if something happens to occasion criticism or ridicule, one suffers a loss of the esteem which

one has been working so hard at keeping. Even the Buddha who was so clean of faults was subjected to ridicule by some people; there is nothing to say about ordinary persons. So praise is always accompanied by ridicule.

Sukha and *dukkha*, too, go together. If circumstances are favourable, one finds happiness and prosperity, and if circumstances are unfavourable, one will be in distress. It is like walking. When walking, one stands only on one foot at a time while the other foot is being lifted. So also, *sukha* and *dukkha* alternate each other.

ONE IS GLAD TO MEET THE GOOD

One should receive the encounters of *Lokadham* with patience and understanding. Those who are incapable of patience and understanding are extremely glad and excited when they encounter the good things and are sorely dejected when they are in distress because of the visitation of bad circumstances of *Lokadham*.

ONE IS DISTRESSED TO MEET THE BAD

One is distressed to receive the encounters of bad things in the manifestations of *Lokadham*. If one does not get the gifts of life or is deprived of what one has already got; if one is left alone with no retinue; if one is criticised or ridiculed; if one suffers from illness and destitution, one feels sore and sad. That is always the case.

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There are instances in which people go mad or die because they are reduced to poverty. They feel gravely affected by the loss of their wealth. According to Jainism, property is part of one's life. The greatest sin is cruelty to life, and as property forms part of life, depriving one's property amounts to killing that person, and is therefore a grave sin. Property, according to that religion, is the chief supportive factor of life, and so if one is deprived of property, one may eventually die from lack of sustenance in life which property gives. To say that property is part of life is quite logical according to its argument. *Alābha* could kill a person.

One is unhappy, if one is deprived of company and attendants. One feels bad when one is subjected to criticism or ridicule, and the gravity of unhappiness can be gauged by the sharpness of criticism and the depth and breadth of the ridicule. Distress is great in the case of character assassination. Physical discomforts of the lighter kind can be ignored, but diseases and ill-treatment of various degrees are often intolerable, and great unhappiness prevails.

THE BUDDHA AND ARAHATS ARE ALSO SUBJECTED
TO LOKADHAM

To the ordinary man, *Lokadham* is common experience. The *Arahats*, that is, those who are clear of the defilements of *kilesā*, are also

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subjected to *Lokadham* though they can receive both the good and bad circumstances with equanimity. So in *Maṅgala Sutta*, the Buddha said:

Phuṭṭhassa lokadhammehi cittaṃ yassa
na kampati, asokaṃ virajaṃ khemaṃ
etaṃ maṅgalamuttamaṃ.

“The mind of the Arahats who is attacked by the eight manifestations of *Lokadham* is not ruffled. For him there is no anxiety or dejection. In him there is not a speck of defiling *kilesa*. There are no dangers for him. This is indeed the highest state of blessedness.”

The Buddha and all the *Arahats* are clear of all defilements but as they are still in this world they are also unavoidably subjected to the laws of *Lokadham*. They will be so subjected till they pass into the state of *Nibbāna*. When they are thus attacked by the vicissitudes of life they are not mentally affected, for they are capable of keeping their minds stable. They are not overjoyed when prosperity comes nor are they dejected when adversity visits them. Not only *Arahats*, even *anāgam* can withstand the onslaughts of *Lokadham*. As for *sotāpan* and *sakadāgam*, they are affected to some extent because they have not yet fully rid themselves of sensual pleasures (*kāma rāga*) or anxiety (*byāpāda*) and anger (*dosa*). That was why the rich man Anāthapiṇḍika wept when he lost his young daughter, Sumana Devi. So did

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Visākhā when she lost one of her young grand-daughters. Yet they knew the *dhamma*, and were capable of resisting the onslaught of fate to a certain extent. Not to say of them, even an ordinary person (*puthujjana*) could resist the onslaught if he would ponder upon the *dhamma*, of course, to some extent. There is no other way to protect oneself from the ill effects of *Lokadham* than pondering upon the *dhamma* in which we all must take refuge. One should, of course, try one's very best to fight the onslaught of *Lokadham* by all available practical means but if these fail, one should take refuge in the *dhamma*.

If, however, one cannot manage to cope with *Lokadham* even by means of the *dhamma* (that is, meditation), one should accept the onslaughts with as much equanimity as one can possibly manage to have. One should take them as a matter of course with patience and forbearance. We must think of the obvious fact that the manifestations of *Lokadham* have to be met and accepted even by such Noble Ones as the Buddha and *Arahats*. These Noble Ones accepted the attacks with patience and endurance, and we must follow in their steps. It is really important to cultivate this attitude.

THE BEST MANGALA

The *Arahats* who are under attack by *Lokadham* are not purified in mind, but as they have

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been clear of all the defilements and are not afraid of the dangers and disasters, they accept the onslaughts with great equanimity. That is the best or noblest of the *maṅgalas* (blessings).

Of course, all *maṅgalas* are the best, as they are all blessings. But this particular *maṅgala* is of the highest order because this is the one fully possessed by *Arahāts*. These Noble Ones are never affected by the attacks of *Lokadham*. they remain calm and stable in mind; for them there is always the mental stability which spells happiness. The Buddha placed this as the last of all the *maṅgalas* in His sermon on *Maṅgala sutta* because it is the highest of all.

The yogis who are now practising meditation should strive for attainment of this *maṅgala*. This *maṅgala* is closely associated with the meditational practice because as the yogi makes a note of the constant happenings and destructions of the phenomena and ponders upon the nature of *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anatta* and as the yogi comes to realize that there is after all no such thing as a living being or a dead one because both the living and dead are compositions of elements and under the governance of *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anatta*, the yogi is capable of patiently accepting the onslaughts of *Lokadham*.

However, the person who is not in the meditational practice will think of all the phenomena as of permanent nature, as giving him pleasur-

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es; he will also think of his body as his own as his self. He is, therefore, glad and excited when good things of life come to him and dejected and depressed when bad things come in the wake of the good things. To differentiate between the one who knows the *dhamma* and the one who doesn't, the Buddha put the following question.

THE QUESTION

“Bhikkhus, let us say that an uninformed worldling (*puthujjana*) is visited upon by the eight manifestations of *Lokadhamma*, and that a fully informed person (*ariya*) is likewise visited upon by them. What is the difference in the reaction of the one and other? Whose efforts (to withstand the onslaught) are more distinctive?”

Now, there are two kinds of “being informed” or having wisdom. That is, there are two kinds of *suta*. They are: *āgama suta* and *adhigama suta*. The former relates to acquiring information about the words of the Buddha. In this reference, such information comprises the knowledge that the eight manifestations of *Lokadhamma* are common to one and all and nobody can avoid them. Yet all happenings are bound, as in the case of other acts and actions, by *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anatta* with the consciousness of *rūpa* and *nāma*. This is a mere acquiring of knowledge and is called *āgama suta*. *Adhigama suta* is deep realisation of the truth, the Four Noble Truths with *vipassanā* insight. Such realisation and the

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mere acquisition of information are necessary for one to withstand the onslaughts of *Lokadhamma*. The Buddha asked about the difference in the reaction of one who is ignorant of these two *suta* and the one who is fully equipped with them.

BHIKKHUS' REPLY

The *bhikkhus* replied, "Oh Lord: all the *dhamma* originates with the Buddha who is the One we all take refuge in, and it is for the Buddha to make expositions of the *dhamma*. It would, therefore, be well that the Buddha give the sermon which we will listen to and cherish all our lives."

It means that the *bhikkhus* requested the Buddha to furnish the answer to his question by Himself.

THE BUDDHA'S EXPOSITION

The Buddha said that *puthujjana*, the uninformed worldling, does not receive the gift of prosperity with the consciousness that it will undergo changes in accordance with the natural laws of *anicca* causing *dukkha* and that it does not belong to oneself, there being no such thing as self, *anatta*. He receives the gift with joy, thinking it is "mine", it belongs to "me". He does not know the realities.

Such uninformed, unconverted persons acquire wealth and estates either by earning them or by getting them without really trying hard. They take it to be success. They think all

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these are theirs, that these belong to them. They do not realise that these things are after all not permanent; they will be either lost or destroyed by theft or fire, or they will decline or collapse owing to unfavourable circumstances and eventually be lost. These persons do not realise that they themselves are not immortal (everlasting) because they are made up of *nāma* and *rūpa* which are perishable. They do not realise that the wealth and estates that have come into their possession are causes for their anxiety, worry and troubles of all sorts. These persons are uninformed. In places where Buddhism does not flourish people are not given such information. Even in Burma there are people who have not been so informed and are, therefore, uninformed of the true meaning of the vicissitudes of life.

In the case of loss of wealth and property, one who is not well informed is incapable of pondering upon impermanence of things and for that reason suffers from misery. The Buddha continued to explain that getting a gift produces, and then takes away, the clean, good state of mind of the uninformed person, and deprivation of the gift does the same. Those who are incapable of realising the truth about the gift of wealth and prosperity as impermanent feel joy when the gift is in their possession. But this sense of possession does not make for meritorious mental state, nor for a chance to listen to a religious

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sermon or do meditational practice because they are too busy making money. Such persons cannot tolerate the loss of their wealth nor can they remain without trying to get some more. If they cannot get wealth they will be disappointed, and if they lose what they have already had they will feel dejected. There is no chance for their minds to be in a meritorious state. They will let their time pass mourning for the loss.

Of course, the degree of their joy and their sorrow over the gain and loss of wealth depends upon the size of the wealth. Therefore, the Buddha continued explaining that the one who has wealth will feel pleasure and sorrow when the wealth is obtained and lost to the extent of how much he placed his value on the wealth. He is pleased when he gets wealth and is angry when he loses it and continues feeling sorry for the loss.

NOT FREE FROM MISERY

Such *puthujjana*, the one who rejoices the gain and mourns for the loss, will not be free from getting new existences, and thus, he will not be free from the misery of old age and death, of anxiety, sorrow, mourning and all kinds of unhappiness. So said the Buddha. This is quite plain. Rejoicing the gain and mourning for the loss, a person does not have time for good deeds and a meritorious state of mind because he is all the time serving *lobha* (greed) and *dosa*

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(anger). He does not have time for effort to get out of *samsāra* and so he is not free from misery of rebirth, old age and death. Anxiety, sorrow and dejection are common occurrences, and it is the loser who gets them. Then there is the trouble of keeping the possessions intact, guarding them against enemies and thus losing sleep and appetite for food. These are the troubles at hand, and if only one can ignore these troubles, there will be some relief.

These remarks can be applied to the case of the other three pairs of the manifestations of *Lokadhamma*. However, I will touch on them briefly.

YĀSA AND AYĀSA

Puthujjanas like to be surrounded by companions and aides. When one gets children after marriage, and also servants and disciples, one feels gratified. One would think that having such a full complement is a permanent state of affairs forgetting that such things, as all things, are impermanent. The sense of permanence or pleasure is after all, an illusion. One often fails to realise that. There are cases of separation or death of husbands and wives, and children, and people are plunged into misery sometimes so great that it culminates in death. There is no chance for meritorious mental state because when one gains one has greed in mind and when one loses one has anger and sorrow, and these

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states of mind occur often, one after another, and there is no chance for gaining merit. Therefore, there occur rebirth, old age, death and anxieties and, sorrows for them.

NINDĀ AND PASANSĀ

When one receives praises one is overjoyed. When one is subjected to criticism and slander one feels utterly dejected. It is because one does not realise that praises and criticisms are just for a while, not at all permanent. When one is joyful from praise one is overwhelmed with *lobha*, and when one is distressed from criticism one is overwhelmed with *dosa*. There is no chance for meritorious state of mind to occur. As *kusala* (merit) is lacking, one is not free from rebirth, old age and death and all the attendant troubles and misery.

SUKHA AND DUKKHA

When one gets what one wants and can use it, one is gratified and happy. When one is thus pleased one often fails to see that this state of being is impermanent and is conducive to misery. In fact, *sukha* or pleasures in secular affairs satisfy people because people have been moving about and doing things and making efforts simply to gain this kind of *sukha*. And it is a fascinating kind, indeed. That is why a certain *deva* once said while enjoying the pleasures of celestial festival in the celestial garden of Nandawun that one would not know the

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meaning of *sukha* before one got to the Nandawun garden. He said that this celestial garden was the place of real pleasures. The one who thinks too much of such pleasures will surely come to grief when one is faced with *dukkha*, the reverse of *sukha*. One would not then be able to observe that all things are impermanent and conducive to misery. Such person usually feels " I am suffering " when he is suffering and " I am enjoying " when he is enjoying. So when one has *sukha*, one is overwhelmed with *lobha* and when faced with *dukkha*, one is overwhelmed with *dosa*. Such persons will not be free from rebirth and its consequences. In a word, they will not get out of *samsāra*.

The foregoing remarks relate to the state of being for the uninformed and unconverted when faced with the eight facts of *Lokadhamma* but in the case of *Ariyas* who are the disciples of the Buddha, they can tolerate the onslaughts of *Lokadhamma* and have a full chance of doing merit and thus be liberated from *samsāra*. Thus said the Buddha.

SPECIAL ATTRIBUTES OF THOSE WITH SUTA

For those who are informed and wise, the *Ariyas*, if gifts and gains come to them, they ponder upon the *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anatta* nature of them, and also upon the changing and destructive nature, and are unmoved. They have right thinking. So do they know rightly when

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the gifts and gains are lost or destroyed. This is the difference in reaction between a *puthujjana* and an *Ariya*. The *Ariya* is fully furnished with informational knowledge (*āgama suta*), and at the same time he has realised for himself through meditation the *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anatta* nature of the entire phenomena. That realisation is because of his *adhigama suta*. Not to say of *Ariya*, even *kalyāṇa puthujjana* (the pious person) is furnished with *āgama suta* and also *adhigama suta*. In fact, *kalyāṇa puthujjana* is included in the group of pious and Noble Ones led by *Ariyas*. Even the one who has just listened to and accepted the Buddha's word should be called His disciple.

PONDERING UPON GAIN AND LOSS

So the Buddha's disciple should ponder upon the impermanence of the gifts and gains when they come, and also upon the troubles that are attending upon wealth and prosperity. Here, troubles do not relate to physical discomforts and ills; they relate to the illusions resulting from enjoyment of the pleasures and the pains and sorrows caused respectively by the gain and the loss. The *dukkha* referred to here is of three kinds: *saṅkhāra dukkha*, *viparināma dukkha* and *pariyāya dukkha*. *Saṅkhāra dukkha* is the result of the impermanence and unpleasantness of things that happen and also their utter helplessness. The gain made is liable to be destroyed and such perishableness is unpleasant, undesirable. And

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that is *dukkha*, or *saṅkhāra dukkha*. The second kind, *viparināma dukkha*, is occasioned by the changes and destruction of the things one has gained. If one does not continue getting the things or if the things already got or gained are lost or destroyed, this kind of *dukkha* will happen. *Pariyāya dukkha* is, in fact, included in the second kind because it relates to the cause of *dukkha*. So the one who gets and gains things should ponder upon the impermanence and perishableness of the things so gained and also upon the perishableness of the owner of these things. That is right thinking.

if one does so, one will not be overwhelmed by joy and satisfaction the gains may have brought. "The right thinking person's feeling of joy will soon disappear; it will not remain long with him," said the Buddha. In the same manner, the sorrow that may be occasioned in the mind of the right thinking person will be short-lived. Such persons will say that gains come when they come and go when they go. Some more will probably come when circumstances are favourable. "I was born with nothing on, and now with whatever I have had, I am fully equipped," they would think. They would also ponder upon the perishable nature of all things.

Now, let us see. An earthen pot breaks when it falls but a pot made of metal doesn't. That is just natural. One should take into considera-

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tion the nature of things and accept the results with a calm mind. There are instances, however, of older people getting angry when young people break things by letting them fall. These old people often failed to recognize the nature of things. A broken thing cannot become whole and entire even if one mourns over it. So we should always ponder upon the impermanent and perishable nature of things and accept the consequences with an accommodating attitude called in *Pāli*: *yoniso-manasikāra*.

If one can take things as they happen, with a sense of acceptance and accommodation, one will not suffer so much from losses. For an ordinary person, *puthujjana*, the suffering diminishes; for *sotāpan* and *sakadāgam* the suffering is much less, and for *Arahat* there is no suffering at all. The person who can control his mind over the gain and the loss of wealth will have ample time to obtain a meritorious mental state. When one gets gains, one can expel the mental state of joy and possession by making a note of that mental state. In the same way, one can make a note of dejection and thus expel it when one is faced with losses. If at all such dejection occurs, it will fade away soon. And there will be peace of mind. The Buddha said that the one who is not glad of gains, and sorry for losses will not hanker after gains or feel dejected over losses. Such a person will be doing his own work, that is, the meditational practice.

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FREE FROM MISERY

“The disciple of the Buddha who has expelled joy and sorrow alike will be free from rebirth, old age and death,” said the Buddha.

What the Buddha taught is that if one does not let his emotions loose on the gains and the losses that may occur to him he will be able to devote his time to making a note of *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anatta* nature of all things physical and mental, and eventually such a person will be able to attain *nibbāna*. Once he has attained that state, there will be no new existence for him, and thus he is liberated from the misery of old age and death. If one has attained *sotapanna meggāñāna*, one will go through not more than seven existences before one attains the ultimate state at which there is no more new existence, that is, *nibbāna*, the end of *samsāra*. For *sakadāgam* there are at most two more existences, and for *anāgam* just one more existence before attainment of *nibbāna*. If one becomes an *Arahat* in the present existence, there is no more new existences for him.

The one unmoved by gains or losses is free from sorrow, dejection and misery; in fact, all kinds of misery. “That I say for sure,” the Buddha said. Freedom from misery of all kinds bears fruit of mental peace even in the present existence. By pondering upon the *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anatta* nature of all things gained or lost, one will not be moved to sorrow, and will, thus,

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gain peace of mind. This peace can be gained even in the present existence if one is so unmoved.

BEST METHOD OF RIDDING ANXIETY

The Buddha said, "The method of ridding anxiety, sorrow, dejection and mourning is following the path of four kinds of *satipaṭṭhāna*. That is the only way to eliminate misery."

So this is the best way of ridding misery because this is the only way to attaining arahatship and thus gaining complete freedom from all kinds of misery. That is the assurance the Buddha gave.

This relates so far to the first pair of *Lokadhamma*, that is, having gains and losses. The results of the *satipaṭṭhāna* practice relating to the other three pairs are the same. So I will speak briefly about them.

HAVING OR NOT HAVING COMPANY

When the informed disciple of the Buddha has a full complement of companions and servants, he ponders upon that situation with a noting of *aniccā*, *dukkha* and *anatta* nature of all things. He knows that he will not always be so furnished, and also that there are troubles over the affairs of family, servants and the retinue. They can be separated from him for one reason or another, and if he ponders upon that impermanent nature of the situation, he will not suffer from *dukkha* when actual

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separation happens. He can control his mind and thus find relief. He will realise that it is better to live alone because then one is free from responsibilities and encumbrances. So if left alone, one will not feel sorry but, on the contrary, one will even feel happy; he will not be affected by the deprivation. As one is thus not overwhelmed by sorrow, one will have time to devote to the meditational practice and achieve freedom from all kinds of misery.

COMMENDATION AND CONDEMNATION

Also, when one is showered with praises, one must ponder upon the impermanent state of the acclamation. One must consider the fact that praises are given to "me" who is after all an aggregate of *rūpa* and *nāma*, for there is no "I", and that soon enough that "I" will be spat with condemnation and contempt. One must remain unmoved, and thus find peace of mind. One must think of living a sinless life and thus acquire real benefit so that one will not lose anything from others' criticism or condemnation. If one can do that, one will not be affected too much by other people's opinions and will have time to do meditational practice and thus seek one's way out of all kinds of misery.

CONNECTION BETWEEN SUKHA AND DUKKHA

We must ponder upon the situation where prosperity and wellbeing prevail in this way:

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“Although I am now enjoying whatever I wish to have I won’t get them always, for when unfavourable circumstances come, all these desirable things will disappear and I will be in trouble. Now I am healthy and comfortable and this *sukha* is, after all, subject to changes, and so when *sukha* is changed to *dukkha*, I will surely suffer. Even now, as I am enjoying the good things of life, I discern that all things, including myself, are in the nature of *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anatta*.” If you are prepared thus, you will suffer little and lightly when *sukha* is changed to *dukkha* under changed circumstances.

In the same manner, when *dukkha* comes, you must ponder upon the *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anatta* nature of things, and say to yourself that *dukkha* will not prevail all the time, and when circumstances changes, its reverse, *sukha*, will come. If it doesn’t come during this life-time, it will surely come in the next existence because all things are subject to change *viparināma*. Even during this life-time, changes for the better will come by force of the good deeds you have done. If you ponder thus, the sting of misery will not be so sharp, and you will find relief. If you persistently make a note of the *dukkha* that is occurring to you, your *samādhi* will develop and the sorrow and dejection will fade out, and you will feel happiness.

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VERY EFFECTIVE REMEDY

If you suffer from ill-effects owing to someone's efforts, or to diseases, or to climatic conditions, and if you have no other remedy to alleviate the pain and suffering, the meditational practice upon the suffering of illness can give at least some relief if it cannot give you a complete cure. If the pain and suffering remain in your body, the meditational practice could render relief to your mind. But if you are either angry or irritated by the physical suffering, your mind will suffer also. The Buddha compared this dual suffering to being pierced by two thorns at the same time.

Let us say a man has a thorn in his flesh, and he tries to extract the thorn by piercing another thorn into his flesh. The second thorn breaks into the flesh without being able to extract the first thorn. Then the man suffers the pain from the two thorns at the same time. So also, the person who cannot make a note of the physical pain in a meditational manner, suffers both physical and mental pain. But if he can ponder well upon the physical pain, he will suffer only that pain and will not suffer mental pain.

This kind of suffering only physical pain, is like that suffered by the Buddha and *Arahats* for they, too, suffer physical pain. They suffer from the ill-effects of heat and cold, flea-bite and other kinds of discomfort. Though they

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suffer from the physical *dukkha*, their minds remain stable, so they do not suffer mental pain. So the meditational method is the best remedy for physical pain and suffering. There are instances of relief gained by this method for those suffering agony as severe as death-agony.

The informed person who is a disciple of the Buddha can ponder upon the true nature of *sukha* when it occurs, and thus save himself from being overwhelmed by joy, and when *dukkha* comes, save himself from overwhelming misery, and thus maintain equanimity. Only this method can overcome the *Lokadhamma* changes in life. When one's mind is calm and stable despite the onslaughts of *Lokadhamma*, one will have an opportunity of maintaining a noble mental state by making constant note of the changes occurring in the six "doors" of the body, and pondering upon the *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anatta* nature. Constant meditational practice will develop one's mental state, that is, *vipassanā ñāṇa*, and gradually gain the four stages of *ariya magga*. Thus, will he be liberated from the meshes of misery. This assurance the Buddha gave.

The variables of *Lokadhamma* prevail in all planes of existence and nobody, not even the Buddha, is exempt from them. The Buddha, however, can receive the onslaught with great patience and stability of mind. We should take

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this example and work hard. People naturally wish for good things in life and try their best to get them, and at the same time they try to avoid the bad things and pains and sufferings but nobody can escape from their onslaughts. As has been said, even the Buddha cannot get away from them. We must, therefore, say to ourselves, "Even the Buddha cannot get away from the onslaughts of *Lokadhamma*; how can such an ordinary person like me hope to do so?" Thinking upon the patience and the equanimity of the Buddha when receiving such onslaughts, we should try our best to follow His example. I will now tell you something about the ill-effects of *Lokadhamma* the Buddha had suffered.

ALABHA AND THE BUDDHA

Once the Buddha was residing near a Brahmin village called Pañcasāla. The reason for His stay was that He foresaw that 500 maidens of that village would attain the stage of *sotāpanna*. On the day for ceremonial worshipping of the planets, the young maidens were permitted to get out of the village and go to the riverside to bathe. They were returning to the village after the bath. At that time the Buddha went out into the Pañcasāla village for alms-food.

The name *Pañcasāla* means "five houses". The village was founded by only five households

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and later it developed, and became a larger village. Since there were five hundred maidens the population of the village must be not less than two thousand and there would naturally be many houses, as many as a hundred or so.

The villagers were then under the spell of Māra, the evil god, and so they could not prepare alms-food for the Buddha. So the Buddha did not receive even one spoonful of rice. On His return, Māra asked the Buddha, "Bhikkhu, did you get alms-food?" The Buddha then said, "Māra, you prevented the villagers from offering me food, didn't you?" Māra then said, "Would you please go back and walk around for food?" He meant to make the villagers jeer at the Buddha.

At that moment the five hundred maidens had arrived at the village-gate on their return from the riverside. They worshipped the Buddha and sat down at an appropriate distance. Māra asked the Buddha, "If you don't get food, don't you feel misery?" The Buddha had come to this village to get this occasion so that He could deliver a sermon for the five hundred maidens. So the Buddha said, "Hey, Māra! Even if I don't get anything to eat today, I will remain in *pīti sukha* (joyfulness) like the great Brahmā of Ābhassarā plane of existence." Meant especially for the five hundred maidens, the Buddha said in the following Pāli verse;

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Susukham̐ vata jīvāma
yesam̐ no natthi kiñcanam̐.
Pītibhakkhā bhavissāma
devā ābhassarā yathā.

“We do not have any desire to possess nor do we have anxiety arising out of *rāga* (sexual desire) and *kilesā* (defilement). We live happily. For today, like the Brahmās of Ābhassarā, we live on the food of *pīti* (joy).”

People kill, rob and steal to make a living. They do business by lying and cheating. Such people think that they achieve happiness by enjoying the fruit of their misdeeds but really they are in for misery, for they are going to hell because of their misdeeds. Even if one earns one's livelihood by honest means, one cannot be said to earn one's living happily unless such pursuits are free of desires and anxiety. As for the Buddha, there was no *rāga* arising from desire and anxiety or *dosa* arising from disappointment at being denied the wants or *moha* arising from false notions of what is good. The Buddha was free of *kilesā* and thus remained calm with mental stability despite the fact that He did not get any alms-food on that day. This is indeed happiness from *dhamma*. So our Buddha lived happily despite hardships.

However, it may be asked whether the Buddha could live happily without food for the day. All beings in the *kāma* (sensual) planes of exis-

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tence are obliged to have the four requirements (*kamma, citta, utu* and *āhāra*) to keep themselves alive, that is, to maintain their physical existence. One can possibly keep oneself alive with the first three; one surely requires to have *āhāra* or food. Man has to take food two or three times a day. Animals have to go out to get food. Of the three factors of life, namely, food, clothing and shelter, food is the most important. To go out to get food is the greatest trouble, and all beings are in constant search of food. The ants are industrious; they move about to seek food day and night. They cannot remain calm and stable without food. Then asked about food, the Buddha replied that, like the Brahmās of Ābhassarā region in the celestial world, *pīti* was the food.

The Brahmās do not eat food. They are always in a state of *jhāna* out of which comes *pīti sukha*, and they live on it. They are never hungry; they are always in *pīti sukha* which is highly developed when they have attained the second stage of *jhāna*. Of the Brahmās who have attained this second stage, the Brahmās of Ābhassarā region have the most distinctive kind of *pīti sukha*. That is why the Buddha said that He could remain happy like the Brahmās of Ābhassarā region although He did not have food to eat for that day.

Joy can be substituted for food. That fact is borne out as clearly in the mundane world

as in the spiritual world. Some persons are overjoyed at the success of something they have worked so hard to accomplish and while that great joy lasts they have no desire for food or sleep. Those who feel joy over some meritorious deeds that they have done, can remain without one or two meals. Those who are deep in meditation remain sitting for one or two days without getting up to take food or to urinate or defecate. The Buddha could remain calmly sitting for one whole week when He was in *phala samāpatti* or *niroda samāpatti*. He could remain without food quite easily for one day simply by going into *vipassanā*. So He said that *pīti* was the food for Him for that day. The reply was made by the Buddha to Māra's question, but the five hundred maidens heard this sermon and all of them attained the state of *sotāpanna*.

Why did these maidens become *sotāpan* merely by hearing the Buddha's simple reply to Māra's question? The reason lies in the fact that these maidens had had special *pāramī* (perfect virtues.) They had had an opportunity to see the Buddha in person and worship Him and also to hear His sermon. So they were overwhelmed with joy (*pīti*) and also confidence in the Buddha arising from their conviction of His nobleness as evidenced in His being clean of *kilesā* and His *pīti* despite deprivation of food for that day. They pondered upon the *anicca*, *dukkha* and

anatta nature of the Buddha's *pīti*, and thus gained insight leading to attainment of the state of *sotāpanna*.

Now, the audience attending this discourse can also gain such insight and attainment if only they can clearly visualise the scene at the gate of Pañcasāla village and ponder upon the Buddha's reply to Māra's question. They can have *pīti*, too, and if they ponder upon the *pīti* meditatively, they can gain attainment similar to that attained by the five hundred maidens of the village.

MILINDA'S QUESTION

With reference to this incident at Pañcasāla village, King Milinda put this question to Venerable Nāgasena: "You all said that the Buddha had received plenty of gifts, the gifts in the form of robes, food, monastery and medicine, the four appropriate furnishings for a monk, and later you all said that the Buddha did not get even a spoonful of rice on His rounds for alms-food at Pañcasāla village. These two statements are contradictory. If the Buddha had plenty of gifts, He should not have been said to have received not even a spoonful of rice. If so, it should not have been said of the Buddha that He had had plenty of gifts. Venerable Nāgasena, please explain this discrepancy."

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NAGASENA'S ANSWER

“King Milinda, it is correct to say that the Buddha had plenty of gifts. It is also correct to say that the Buddha did not get even a spoonful of rice at Pañcasāla village. But the fact that He did not get alms-food at Pañcasāla village, does not prove that the Buddha was in privation. Now let us say a villager came to the palace of an emperor with the gift of a honey pot or a bee-hive. The doorman of the royal palace said to the villager: ‘This is not the time for His Majesty to meet visitors. Get away, or you’d be taken into custody.’ The villager was frightened and beat a retreat, taking away with him the gift that he had meant to make to the emperor. The emperor was deprived of this gift, but does that mean that the emperor was in a state of privation?

“In the same way, the Buddha had been having plenty of gifts but in that instance, Māra acting like the doorman of the emperor, had prevented the villagers from offering the Buddha the alms-food. Does that prove that the Buddha was in privation? You shouldn’t take it that way. Except for that single day, the Buddha had for fortyfive Lents, that is, for over sixteen thousand four hundred days, had plenty of gifts offered Him daily. So it is correct to say that the Buddha had had plenty of gifts.” So said Venerable Nāgasena in reply to the King’s question.

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We must know that in view of the *dāna pāramī* which the Buddha in His earlier existences for four eons and one hundred thousand worlds had fulfilled, He had had an enormous amount of gifts of all kinds. Yet for one day at least He had to suffer privation owing to the evil machinations of Māra: He had confronted the *alābha* phase of *Lokadhamma* for that short time. As for us, ordinary human beings, the phases of *Lokadhamma* will visit us without fail. If we can follow in the footsteps of the Buddha with great confidence in Him and cultivate patience to withstand the onslaughts of adversity, we will be relieved to a certain extent of the pangs of misery.

BUDDHA HAD TO TAKE MAYAW RICE

Once, twelve years after having attained the Buddhahood, the Buddha went to a town called Verañjā in Western Part of India. He sat down underneath a neem tree called Naleru near that town. The tree was so named after the ogre who had taken possession of it. Just as we have in Burma certain trees said to have been possessed by some spirit and called by the name of that spirit. With the Buddha were five hundred bhikkhus.

At that time a certain brahmin who was a resident of that town came to the Buddha and laid charges, and the Buddha gave the accusing brahmin a sermon, and the barhmin attained the

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state of *sotāpanna*. So the brahmin requested the Buddha to spend the current Lent at that town. The Buddha granted that request, and He and His five hundred disciples spent the Lent there.

The brahmin of Verañjā had requested the Buddha to stay for the Lent but he had not offered to build a monastery for Him, and the hundred disciples had to seek shelter wherever available near that tree. The shelters for them were probably the smaller neem trees around that big neem tree. As there was a drought in that year, the monks did not have trouble from getting wet with rain.

During that stay Māra was doing his evil work. He made the people living within a radius of one *yujanā* (roughly six miles) ignorant of the Buddha, the monks and religion. Besides, there was a famine. People themselves were supplied with food under a ration system. In those times communication was so bad that distribution of goods must have been in a disastrous condition. The people were starving. There was no one in the town who would offer food to the monks.

At that time five hundred horse-dealers from Kashmir in Northern India arrived at that town. As there was famine, there was no one to buy a horse, but the rains had come to their home district and they were obliged to remain in that town. These horse-dealers were willing to offer food to the Buddha and His disciples but as

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they were mere sojourners they had no facilities to make the offering a daily affair. They had with them a large supply of *pulaka* or a tough kind of wheat for feeding their horses. This could be unhusked and boiled and eaten. The term *pulaka* has been often translated as *mayaw* rice. The horse-dealers fed their horses only once instead of twice daily as they used to do, and offered the horse-food to the Buddha and the monks. As they were just sojourners, they could not afford to cook the wheat and offer the cooked meal. The monks had to make-do with what was offered them.

The wheat had to be boiled and the boiled wheat set in the sun to dry, and then the dried wheat had to be crushed or pounded and wetted with water and taken as meal. The work had to be done by groups of eight or ten monks each. The horse-dealers offered butter and honey also. The Venerable Ānandā mixed wheat with butter and honey and offered the meal to the Buddha. It is said that *devas* put their celestial food in the mixture. The Buddha accepted the food and after taking it, spent the entire day sitting under the great neem tree and went into *phala samāpatti*. All the monks, with the exception of Venerable Ānandā, were *Arahats*. Venerable Ānandā was then only a *sotāpan*. So, all the other monks were also sitting under their respective neem trees and entering into *phala samāpatti* all day. In this manner the Buddha and the five hundred *Arahats* spent the entire

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Lent at that famine-ridden place. This is an instance which compels our admiration for the Buddha and His disciples.

To a person of ordinary intellect this episode is not quite a satisfactory one. He would probably ask why the Buddha who had for so many lifetimes done meritorious and noble deeds should have been obliged to take this mean kind of food. And His disciples who were all *Arahats* should have to take such humble meal; why? The answer is simple. Both the Buddha and the *Arahats* were not exempt from the lokadhamma. That should be a short and satisfactory answer. The answer in Pāli version (in *Apādam* Pali Text) reads:

Phussassāham pāvacane, sāvake pribhāsayim.
Yavam khādatha bhuñjatha, mā ca bhuñja-
tha sālayo.

Tena kammavipākena, temāsam khāditaṃ
yavaṃ.

Nimantito brāhmaṇena, veriñjāyaṃ vasiṃ
tadā.

The Buddha said, "During the time of Phussa Buddha I told His disciples to eat *mayaw* rice, not the softer and finer kind, *salay* rice. This I said by way of a threat. In retribution for this use of abusive language I had accepted the request of Veriñja brahmin and spent the Lent at Veriñja town and was obliged to eat the rough horse-food rice of *mayaw* kind."

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It may be asked if it would not be better for the Buddha to avoid this particular town which was bewitched by Māra and go to another place to spend His lent. Retribution will follow the Buddha wherever He went, and so it makes no difference whether He stayed for the Lent at Veriñja or elsewhere. Māra would follow Him and play his tricks upon the residents who would have offered Him and His disciples almsfood. It had been better that He stayed at Veriñja because it was there the horse-dealers stopped and offered at least *mayaw* rice to Him and His disciples.

Then it may be asked why Māra did not play his tricks upon the horse-dealers too. Well, he was a bit late. He had bewitched the townspeople, and by then the horse-dealers had already made an offer of the *mayaw* rice to the Buddha and His disciples. Anything that had been offered to the Buddha could not be tempered with by anybody. That is what *Milinda Pañhā* and the *Atthakathās* have said.

We now know why the Buddha had to pay for the abusive language He had used in an earlier existence. What about His disciples, the five hundred *bhikkhus*? We may take it that if such a personality as the would-be Buddha had made such a speech-sin, these five hundred would-be *Arahats* must have committed similar sins in one of their previous existences.

All we will have to think about is that if such a personality as the Buddha had to pay a

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retribution in the form of being denied the gift or gain (*alābha*), we, ordinary persons, will surely be faced with such an adversity one day, and all we must do is to follow in the footsteps of the Buddha and endure the penury. We should ponder thus and, while being deeply respectful of the Buddha's patience and endurance, practise patience and endurance like Him. We should also take notice of the patience and endurance of the Buddha's five hundred disciples who were obliged to pound the tough rice and eat it, the kind of rice much inferior to the meanest kind that we have at present, and find admiration for them.

So the Buddha said: "Ānandā, you, the good person, have achieved success. You have conquered *lobha* (greed) and mean desires."

The Buddha's conquest of the scarcity of food lay in His infinite patience and endurance. The village of Veriñja was famine-stricken but the nearby villages were not; they were quite well-off. The Buddha's disciples did not blame the Buddha for having stayed at Veriñjā village. They all endured with patience. That is why the Buddha said to His secretary, Ānandā, that all His disciples had achieved success.

Their conquest of *lobha* lay in the fact that these *bhikkhus* did not go for their alms-food for a distance which did not warrant return the same day, nor did they move to another place, thus breaking their vow of the Lent. Their conquest of their desire for obtaining gifts

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by base means lay in their refraining from advertising their nobleness, declaring to the people that they had attained Arahantood, in order to make the people want to offer them alms.

After the Buddha had praised the five hundred *bhikkhus* for their conquest of greed and base desires, He predicted that in future times monks would become greedy. He said: "Many of the monks of the future will be too choosy about the alms offered to them. They will say that that particular rice is too tough, or too soft, that particular curry is salty, or with too little salt, sour or cold." Such monks you can find today.

KING ASOKA AND HALF A GOOSEBERRY

Many of you know how powerful was King Siri Dhammāsoka, and how rich he was. He could spend one hundred crores of the currency of his day on charity for Buddhist religious purposes. Yet, at last, this rich and powerful King had only half a gooseberry, according to Visuddhi Magga:

sakalam medinim bhutvā, datvā koṭi-satam sukhi anḍāmalakamatassa, ante issarataṃ gato.

"King Asoka was extremely rich, having enjoyed enormous revenue, spent one hundred crores of currency, but at last he was reduced to possession of half a gooseberry. Thus had he been deprived of his power and affluence."

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The King was old and ailing, so his ministers turned over the royal treasury to his grandson, the Crown Prince. The King was so keen on giving alms that he gave away in charity the golden cups and plates which contained his daily food. So the ministers saw to it that his food was sent to him in silver cups and plates, and he gave away the silvers too. Then copper cups and plates were furnished, and he gave them away until at last only half a gooseberry was sent him in an earthen cup. The King asked his followers, "Who governs this land?" The followers said that he did. The King said, "Not so. I have fallen from the position of King. I possess only half a gooseberry." Soon he passed away. So says *Dibyaṅga* treatise. So does *Visuddh Magga*. We should ponder upon the story of King Asoka and practise contentment and thus seek relief from misery.

THE BUDDHA WITHOUT FOLLOWERS

Once the Buddha who had usually had hundreds of followers around Him, was without any. One day as the Buddha was travelling, accompanied by his personal secretary Nāgasamāla thera, the secretary requested the Buddha to accept His alms bowl and robes and said that he would leave the Buddha. The Buddha was obliged to receive His own bowl and robes and walk His way alone. But that was not for long. Nāgasamāla thera was robbed of his own bowl

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and robes by bad men and was beaten on the head, and so he went back to the Buddha.

Then again, the Buddha went to *Jantu* village along with a *bhikkhu* by the name of Meghiya. As they were walking across a mango grove, Meghiya said to the Buddha that he would like to do meditation in that grove and asked the Buddha to take His alms bowl and robes. The Buddha found this improper and asked Meghiya to wait for another *bhikkhu* to come along, but Meghiya was insistent. So the Buddha gave him the bowl and robes, and remained alone. The Buddha's solitary state was not too long. Meghiya went into the mango garden and sat upon a rock and began his meditation. As he was doing so, he was assailed by unseemly thoughts and desires. The reason for this was that on that very rock for one hundred previous existences of his, Meghiya had enjoyed sexual pleasures with dancers and handmaids; he was a king in those existences. So vestiges of his past pleasures were stuck on this rock, as it were, and he was unwittingly aroused by them in his thoughts. He had forgotten that he was a *bhikkhu* and thought himself as the king who was enjoying pleasures on this rock. And on this rock, too, he, as the king, had sentenced a robber to death for charges of robbery, and another to prison term for similar charges.

Meghiya was surprised at the unexpected unseemly thoughts that assailed him while he was meditating. Then he came to understand the

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reason for the Buddha's forbidding him to go into the grove to do meditation. And so he came back to the Buddha.

Then again, at Kosambī city a dispute arose among the monks upon the incident of leaving some water in the washing bowl in a latrine. It was not an important matter but the dispute developed, and the monks were split in two groups. The Buddha tried to patch up the differences but it was in vain, so He left Ghositā-rāma monastery of that city and went into Palele jungle and remained there for the Lent all alone. Venerable Ānandā was to have accompanied the Buddha but he knew that the Buddha wanted to remain alone. In Palele jungle a huge elephant attended upon in Buddha's needs. The Buddha went into Palele village to receive alms food. The villagers built a hut with a roof covered by leaves for the Buddha to live in. From secular point of view, the Buddha's condition of life for that period was unsatisfactory, but to the Buddha it was a life of real happiness, of peace of mind.

We all should ponder upon the Buddha's state of mind in such unfavourable living conditions and seek real happiness by cultivating peace of mind.

Secular-minded people would not like to be alone and would be sad to be alone and left to oneself. Who would ever want to be without companions, and who could ever avoid such a

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condition? Everybody will have to go through such conditions of deprivation, for it is the law of the world, *Lokadhamma*. The Buddha was left alone for some time in His final year of life, just before He passed into the state of *prinibbāna*. The Buddha was stopping at a large village called Medalupa about 24 miles from the city of Sāvutthi. King Pasenadi Kosala came to worship the Buddha. Before he entered the Buddha's living chamber, the King took off the regalia and entrusted it to Digha Kārāyana, a nephew of General Bandoola, himself a high army official, and the King entered alone. He made obeisance to the Buddha and conversed with Him on matters relating to religion.

Meanwhile, Digha Kārāyana gave the regalia to the King's son, Viṭatūbha, and made him king. They left the old King at the monastery, leaving behind only a horse and a maid, and went to the capital city of Sāvutthi. When the old King came out of the Buddha's chamber, the maid reported the matter to him. The old King then decided to go to his nephew, King Ajātassattu, to seek the latter's help in fighting his usurper. The distance was 45 yūjanā (over 300 miles), so when the old King got to a rest-house on the outskirts of the city of Rajagaha, he died of illness and also from sheer exhaustion.

King Pasenadi Kosala was in those days a very powerful king in Middle India, but as

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ill-fate decreed, he died with no companion other than a handmaid and a horse in a rest-house outside a foreign capital city. It is a sad story, but it illustrates the workings of unfavourable circumstances according to the laws of life, *Lokadhamma*. So when we ponder upon the fate of this great king we can find relief from the sufferings occasioned by the onslaughts of *Lakadhamma*.

CALUMNY AND THE BUDDHA

The Buddha had all the attributes of nobleness and sacredness as evident in the Nine Great Attributes of the Buddha, and was therefore clean of all kinds of defilement and free of faults of any kind. There should be no pretext for any slander or criticism; on the contrary, there are many reasons and occasions for highest esteem for the Buddha. All the beings, human and celestial, had been untiring in their praises, tributes and adoration. Yet the unbelievers who were dead against the Buddha tried their best to bring about occasions and invent excuses for calumny and slander for Him. These opponents had never failed to take every available opportunity to cast slanders and abuses on the Buddha and His teachings.

CIÑCAMANA'S ACCUSATIONS

The *titthis* (unbelievers) persuaded a hermitess named Ciñcamāna (Ciñcamānavikā) to make accusations against the Buddha. Ciñcamāna, dressed

finely and properly, went toward Jetavana monastery at night-time and slept at a clubhouse of the unbelievers near the monastery. In the early morning she hurried toward the city as if she had come out of Jetavana monastery. When passers-by asked her why she was in a hurry and where she had slept, she replied coyly in a question form: "What can you gain from knowing what I have been doing?"

Ciñcamāna had been doing like this for a month or so, and then when people enquired about her goings-on, she said by way of admission, "I went to Jetavana monastery and slept with Gotama." Three or four months later, she placed a bale of cloth on her stomach and tied it around her waist and covered it with her outer garment to make it look like a pregnancy. Then one day at a sermon meeting at Jetavana monastery Ciñcamāna walked into the audience and made accusations saying, "Oh Great Monk, it is good that you have been giving sermons but you have neglected the pregnancy you have caused in me and failed to make arrangements for my confinement." That was the meanest attempt to put the Buddha to shame, but soon, owing to the great powers of the Buddha, the false bulge of the stomach slipped down. The audience was angry and drove Ciñcamāna out of the monastery. The wicked hermitess was swallowed up by the earth when she got out of sight of the Buddha,

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and went directly down the deepest bowels of hell.

SUNDARĪ'S ACCUSATIONS

A similar case had occurred. Sundarī, a beautiful hermitess of a gang of opposing unbelievers, did exactly as Ciñcamāna had done. She loitered near Jetavana monastery and walked as if she had come out of the monastery. When asked by people, she said, "I went to Gotama and slept with him in his chamber." Then the unbeliever-gangsters paid money and asked bad hats to kill the girl and throw the corpse in a dust-bin near the monastery. Then they raised a rumour that Sundarī was missing, and reported the case to King Kosala. When the King asked them if they could think of a possible place of crime, they said. "Lately, Sundarī had been living in Jetavana monastery. We don't know what has become of her." The gangsters pretended to make a search around the monastery. They then pointed to a dust-bin and exclaimed that the girl's corpse was in it. They placed the corpse on a cot and paraded in the streets for the citizens to see it. Then they reported to the King that Gotama's disciples killed the girl because they did not want her affair with their master to become known to the public. The King ordered without properly judging the case that the matter be made known to the public.

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That was a good chance of the opposing unbelievers to make capital out of the incident. They went round the city and proclaimed that Gotama's disciples had killed the girl to conceal her affair with their master. Many of non-Ariyas misunderstood the disciples of the Buddha and cast slanders on them. The disciples sadly reported the matter to the Buddha. In reply to the charges, the Buddha gave the following sermon:

Abhūtavādī nirayaṃ upeti,
yo vāpi katvā na karomi cāha.
Ubhopi te pecca samā bhavanti,
nihīnakammā manujā parattha.

“He who makes false charges against another goes to hell; he who denies what he has done (that person also) goes to hell. These two wicked types of people equally get for their wicked deeds the award of falling into hell.”

The *bhikkhus* repeated the Buddha's verse in Pāli to the people, and those who cast slanderous remarks were frightened. They said among themselves, “Making false charges pushed one to hell. We did not see what had happened and would not know whether or not it happened as these persons had accused. They may have made false accusations. And then if they denied that they had done it, they would go to hell. It doesn't seem to be as these unbelievers have charged.” So the people stopped saying anything damaging to the monks. The slanderous campaign died down within a week.

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King Kosala sent out spies and detectives to find out the truth in this case. The assassins who had killed Sundarī were having a drinking party with the money they had received from the gangsters who had asked them to kill the girl. As they were getting drunk, one of them said to another, "Hey fellow, didn't you strike just one blow with the stick and kill Sundarī? So you are now having a drinking party with the money you got for killing the girl, aren't you? All right! All right! So be it." The police officers who had heard this pounced upon the assassins and took them to the presence of the King. The King tried the case, and both the assassins and the unbelieving gangsters confessed. Then the King ordered them to go round the city and make public confessions. They were ordered to declare publicly that it was they who killed Sundarī and that Gotama and his disciples were innocent. This public confession made the case clear and proved the innocence of the Buddha and His disciples, and people rid themselves of their misunderstanding.

THE STORY OF MĀGANDĪ

Once the Buddha and the *bhikkhus* went to the city of Kosambhī. One of the reigning King Utena's wives, Queen Māgaṇḍī, bribed bad hats and ordered them to go out and rail at the Buddha and His disciples as they entered the city. The reason for this action on Māgaṇḍī's

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part was that Māgaṇḍī bore a grudge against the Buddha. She was a very beautiful young lady and so her father, a brahmin, turned down all offers of marriage from the sons of high-class people. He used to tell them that they were not worth his daughter's hand. He was searching for a suitable bridegroom. The Buddha foresaw that the brahmin and his wife would become *anāgam*, and so He went near the place the brahmin was holding a lighting festival.

Seeing the Buddha, brahmin Māgaṇḍī said to himself "This man is cut above others. There won't be any equal of him in this world. This man, or this monk, is worthy of my daughter." So he accosted the Buddha saying, "Sir, I have a beautiful daughter, and I wish to offer her to you. Will you please wait at this place?" and hurried back home. When he arrived at his home he said to his wife, "Wife, I have just found a man suitable to be our daughter's husband. Follow me with your daughter, properly dressed." When the three of them came to the spot where the Buddha had been requested to wait, they found only the Buddha's footprint, which was purposely left for them to see.

It was only when the Buddha willed that His footprint was impressed upon the earth. The footprint could not be erased during the period set by His will. And also it could be seen only by those whom He had willed to see it. The brahmin's wife turned to her husband

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and asked: "Where is your bridegroom?" The brahmin said, "It is here that I have requested him to wait. Where is he gone now?" and looked around, and pointing to the footprint said, "Ah, here's his footprint!"

The brahmin's wife was versed in the art of fortune-telling. She looked at the footprint and said, "The owner of this footprint is not the one who enjoys sex." The brahmin silenced her saying that her knowledge of *veda* (fortune-telling art) was just little, and hurried after the Buddha. The brahmin said to the Buddha when he found Him, "Lord Bhikkhu, I do hereby offer you my daughter to be at your service."

The Buddha did not reply to the brahmin directly. He said, "brahmin Māgaṇḍī, I will tell you something." Then He told the brahmin the story of His renunciation and His attainment of the Light and His stay for fifty days in seven places till he came to sit under the Ajapāla banyan tree, and also Māra's campaign against Him, Māra's daughters' enticements which failed and disappointed Māra. This the Buddha told the brahmin couple to let them understand that He was free of sexual desires. He also wanted the brahmin couple to gain an insight of the *dhamma*, and so He gave the following reply:

Disvāna taṇhaṃ, aratiṃ, ragañca,
nāhosi chaṇḍo api methunasmiṃ.

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Kimevidam muttakarīsapunnam,
pādāpi nam samphusitum na icche.

“Although I had seen Taṇhā, Aratī and Ragā, the three daughters of Māra, sexual desire did not occur. It need not be said that seeing this girl, Māgaṇḍī whose body is virtually stuffed with urine and excrement, did not arouse sexual desire. I have no desire even to touch her body with my foot.”

The brahmin and his wife who heard this reply became *anāgam*. They entrusted their daughter to the care of her uncle, Cūla Māgaṇḍī, and entered the Holy Order, soon becoming *Arahats*.

Māgaṇḍī was angry when she heard the Buddha's reply. She was offended that the Buddha said that her body was a storehouse of urine and excrement. She said to herself, “Well, if he didn't want me, he should say so. Why did he say that I am full of excrement (faeces) and urine? That's downright derogatory.” Then she continued saying to herself, “Well, let it be. I can get a good husband. Then I will show Gotama what I can do to him.”

Her uncle presented her to King Utena, of Kosambī Kingdom. The King was pleased with Māgaṇḍī's beauty and made her a queen. There were two other queens already. They were Vasula-dattā, daughter of King Chandrapejjota, and Sāmāvati, an adopted daughter of a rich

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man named Ghosaka. There were five hundred handmaids for each of the three queens.

The King gave eight kyats daily for Sāmāvati to buy flowers. The money was handed to her slave Khujjuttrā who had to go out daily to buy flowers. One day at the house of Sumana, the flower-seller, there was a feeding ceremony for the Buddha and the Sanghas. The flower-seller asked Khujjuttrā to stay longer than usual to hear the Buddha's sermon after the meal. Khujjuttra attended the sermon and became a *sotāpan* after the sermon.

As a *sotāpan*, one strictly observes the five precepts. So Khujjuttrā who had been pinching four kyats from the daily eight kyats, stopped doing it, and bought eight kyats' worth of flowers. When the queen saw more flowers than usual, she asked the slave woman, "Why, sister Khujjuttrā? Did the King give you twice the usual allowance?" Khujjuttrā said no. Then the queen asked her why there were so many flowers. A *sotāpan* never tells a lie and is always strict in the observance of the five precepts. Khujjuttrā who had then become a *sotāpan* said that she had been stealing four kyats out of eight, and buying only four kyats' worth of flowers every day, but that day she had stopped stealing. When asked why, Khujjuttrā said she had had an opportunity of hearing the Buddha's sermon at the house of the flower-seller and come to realize the *dhamma*, and so

she had stopped her practice of pinching some money from the daily allowance given to buy flowers.

Here, if the queen were an evil-minded woman she would probably scold the slave-woman and ask her to surrender the stolen money. But Queen Sāmāvatī was good-natured and had a mind of a person of *pāramī* (virtue). So, she was considerate. She pondered upon the change of Khujjuttrā's attitude and character. The queen reflected that the slave woman who said she had realized *dhamma*, stopped stealing and told the truth without fear. So the *dhamma* Khujjuttrā had realized must be a sacred one, and it would be good to know that *dhamma*, Queen Sāmāvatī thought to herself. So she said to Khujjuttrā: "Elder sister, please let us drink of the *dhamma* that you have imbibed." The slave-woman said that if she had to recount the sermon, she must first make herself neat and tidy. So she requested permission to take a bath and dress herself properly. She would do that in deference to the sacred *dhamma* that she was asked to recount.

After having taken a bath and dressed herself properly, Khujjuttrā sat on the place where a preacher usually sat and recounted the Buddha's sermon properly and completely. Queen Sāmāvatī and her five hundred maids became *sotāpan* after hearing the sermon.

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From that day on, Khujjuttrā was elevated to the position of a mother or a mentor and permitted to go to attend the Buddha's sermons. Khujjuttrā came back to recount the sermons she had heard. In this way, Khujjuttrā became the most informed of three *pitakas* and was later bestowed upon by the Buddha with the credit of being the most informed of the *dhamma* among the lay-women.

Having heard so often the sermons of the Buddha as recounted by Khujjuttrā, Queen Sāmāvatī and her maids had a strong desire to see and worship the Buddha. So she asked Khujjuttrā to take them to the Buddha. Khujjuttrā said, "Ladies, it is nearly impossible for you all to go out of the palace (without the King's permission) because it is the King's house, as you may say so. So please bore small holes in the wall opposite the road so that you all may be able to look at and adore the Buddha and His disciples on their way to some rich man's house on invitation to a feast." The queen and the maids bored holes in the wall and peeped through and worshipped the Buddha and the Sangha. One day Māgaṇḍī visited Sāmāvatī's chamber and saw the holes in the wall. She asked about them. Not knowing that Māgaṇḍī had a grudge against the Buddha, Sāmāvatī told her that the Buddha was then in Kosambhī City and that they saw the Buddha and His disciples and worshipped them from inside the

palace chamber. Māgaṇḍī was enraged and said to herself, "Now the Buddha is in the city; I will do what I have wanted to do to him. These women are Gotama's disciples; I will do something to them, too." So she went to the King and maligned Sāmāvatī but her efforts were of no avail. Well, that's by the way. This is just a part of the story of the two queens.

Māgaṇḍī gave money to her slaves and servants and asked them to go out and abuse the Buddha and drive Him out of the city. Those who did not believe in the Buddha's *dhamma* did as the evil queen had asked them. When the Buddha and His followers walked into the city, these unbelievers followed them on the roadside and shouted abuses of all kinds. For instance, they uttered, "You are a thief, a bad man, a camel, a bull, an ass, an animal, one who will go to hell. For you there is no heaven; there is only hell." That is terrible. Once one deviates from the right path, evil deeds multiply. These people were buying evil awards for their evil deeds; in fact, they gained nothing. After so many occasions of abuses, Venerable Ānandā said to the Buddha, "Lord, this city is full of uncivilized persons. They have been abusing us for no apparent reasons. Let us go to another city." The Buddha asked, "What would you do when you went to another city where people there also abused us? Where would you go then?" Ānandā replied, "Then, Sir, we would go on to another city."

The Buddha said, "Ānandā, it is not advisable to move on to another place whenever we are abused. Any problem of riotous misbehaviour should be solved at the place where it occurs. Then only should we move on to another place." The Buddha said He had the courage to endure the abuses of evil persons. Thus He said:

Ahaṃ nāgo va saṅgāme,
cāpato patitaṃ saraṃ.
Ativākyam titikkhissam,
dussīlo hi bahujjano.

"Just as the great elephant on the war front endures the arrows coming from all sides, I, the Buddha, will endure all the abusive words without a murmur. Many of the people are evil in their action and speech and are rough and rude."

Many people are unable to restrain their action and speech, and most of them are rude. One can live in the midst of such people only if one can tolerate their misbehaviour. So, the Buddha said, "Just as the great elephant on the war front endures the arrows coming from all sides, I will endure the abuses." Continuing, He said to Ānandā, "Ānandā, do not worry. They will be able to abuse just for seven days. They will stop on the eighth day, and the situation will be calm and peaceful."

It was so, as He had said. It was always the case with the mud-slinging campaign against the Buddha. That is why there is a Burmese saying to the effect that "Slander lasts seven days, so does praise."

Now, of the three cases of slander, accusation and abuse, the reason for the accusation of Ciñcamāna originated far in the past. In the remote past, the would-be Buddha Gotama committed the sin of making false accusation of an *Arahat* named Nanda, a disciple of the Buddha Abhibhu. So says the *Apādan* Pāli text. Regarding the accusation in relation with Sundarī, the would-be Buddha Gotama levelled unwarranted accusations against Pacceka Buddha named Surabhi. The reason for the accusation against the five hundred monks in the case of Sundarī is that these five hundred joined with their Master, the would-be Gotama Buddha, in the latter's false accusations against a holy hermit named Bhima who had attained *jhāna*. There is no mention of the reason for being abused by *Māgaṇḍī*. Anyway, the Buddha had to endure *Māgaṇḍī*'s abusive campaign because of a past sin of abusing a person against whom he should not have any grudge.

Sin is terrible; retribution for any sin could and did follow one, even if he was to be a Buddha, to the very end of the *samsāra*. So we should be extremely careful in avoiding sins of any kind. And when one has to face slander, accusation

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and abuse, one should recall that even the Buddha had been obliged to face similar calumny and had endured it, and try to practice patience to be able to endure it.

PHYSICAL MISERY AND THE BUDDHA

Misery is of two kinds, physical and mental. As for mental misery, the Buddha was completely clean of it. When confronted by disappointments, dejections, sorrows, even the danger of death, the Buddha was free of mental misery. His mind was always clear. The same with an *Arahat*; even an *anāgam* who has rid himself of *dosa* (anger) and mental difilements, has no mental misery. But in an *anāgam* there linger some vestiges of *avijjā*, *bhava taṇhā* and *māna* constituting *kilesā*, and so we cannot say that he is completely rid of mental misery. As for an *Arahat*, he is clean of *kilesā*, and is therefore free from mental misery. But as for physical misery, no one is exempt.

The Buddha was obliged to bear physical misery quite often. This is proved by what the Buddha sometimes said about His back-ache. According to the *Apādan* Pāli text, the Buddha had to suffer from this physical misery because in one of His earlier existences He was a pugilist, and had caused pain to an opponent. Then again, when He was a son of a fisherman, He was delighted to see fish being beaten on the head. So it is said that the Buddha often had a head-ache.

Once, as the Buddha was taking a stroll on a terrace of the Mountain of Gijjhakūṭa, Devadatta rolled down a huge stone on Him. The stone struck the ridge jutting over the Buddha, and a shrapnel struck His leg, causing immense pain. The reason for that misery was that in one existence the would-be Buddha killed a cousin of his with a rock in a dispute over inheritance, and also that when he was a king he had had culprits speared to death. Then again, the reason for His suffering from diarrhea was that when he was a physician, he gave a rich man's son a medicine which caused looseness of bowels and blood motions.

And then, according to *Samyutta* Pāli text, once Venerable Kassapa and Venerable Mahā Moggalāna suffered from an acute disease; so did the Buddha. But the disease disappeared after they had listened to Bojjhaṅga Dhamma.

Then again, the Buddha spent His 45th, and last Lent at Veluva village near Vesālī city. At that time He suffered from a grave illness which would have caused His passing away had He not gone into *vipassanā bhāvanā*. He averted the eventuality because He saw that it was not an appropriate time for passing into *nibbāna*. He said so, and according to *Aṭṭhakathā*, Pāli text, the Buddha went into *vipassanā bhāvanā* just as vigorously as He had done on the eve of His attainment of Buddhahood. Today there are several instances in which a yogi practising

meditation could stave off dire consequences from grave illness. We may say that these instances are of the same kind as the instance of overcoming diseases by Venerable Mahā Kasapa and other *Arahats* and the Buddha by hearing recitation of Bojjhaṅga sutta and *vipassanā bhāvanā* practice.

We can find relief and solace in the fact that even the Buddha had to face the *Lokadham* of physical misery. Especially in cases of severe illness and long drawn-out diseases hard to cure, the sufferer should ponder thus: "Even the Buddha cannot avoid such kind of *Lokadham*. What can be said for me then? However, the Buddha suffered from physical misery but never from mental misery. So also I will endure so as to obviate mental misery." If you can afford to do meditation, you should ponder upon *dukkha vedanā* (feeling of misery) by making a note of the feelings as they are as these feelings occur, without letting *dosa* and other ill deeds creep in. To an experienced practitioner of meditation, suffering can be endured and relief can be found.

The important thing is to reject the feelings of great sorrow by means of *vipassanā* at the time when the sufferer comes to know that his end is very near or that even if he recovers he will probably be incapacitated for life and that his life will be useless. Dhamma is the best medicine for curing oneself of such anguish.

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Supposing, one suffers from headache for a long time and suffers much from it because there is no effective medicine for the disease. If, however, the medicine is available, the headache will go soon after taking the medicine. In the same way, if you don't have the medicine of meditation, you will suffer much and long from mental misery. The Buddha pondered thus: "This misery which occurs now is not permanent; it will disappear in due course. What I call "I" is after all a conglomeration of *rūpa* and *nāma*, and is not permanent; there is an incessant change, and this conglomeration is not attractive and cannot be depended upon: it is all misery. As there is a constant change of phenomena in this conglomerate, it is of the nature of *anatta*." Or the Buddha's disciple makes a note of the happening and disappearance of the phenomena in *nāma-rūpa* and ponder upon the *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anatta* nature of them, and thus knows the truth as it is. As he is doing so, there is no occasion for mental misery, and even if it occurs it will not last long. With the disappearance of mental misery, physical misery also disappears or can be said to disappear. If it does not, it will possibly be quite tolerable.

One does not feel elated by the good things of *Lokadham* nor does he feel sorrow for the bad things; thus one is free from *anurodha* or delight, or from *virodha* or disappointment and sorrow. So the Buddha said: "Thus delight or

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sorrow for the *Lokadhamma* excepted, the informed disciple of the Buddha is free from rebirth, old age and death.”

When in this manner of meditation one gains *vipassanā* insight and attains the four *ariya magga ñāṇa*; when one becomes an *Arahat* on reaching the stage of *Arahatta magga phala* and in due course enters the state of *nibbāna*, then there is no new existence, nor old age, nor death. Besides, as the Buddha said, “One is free from anxiety, sorrow and mourning, from physical misery and mental misery and deep distress.”

FREE FROM ALL MISERY

The freedom from misery of all kinds that has been dealt with in the foregoing statements is for the present existence. When one becomes an *Arahat* and passes into the state of *nibbāna*, all kinds of misery will disappear and peace will ensure. The Buddha made this assurance in conclusion.

The uninformed person, the *puthujjana*, does not realise the *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anatta* nature of all the phases of *Lokadham*, so he becomes elated when he comes by the good parts of *Lokadham* and feels dejected when the bad parts come up to him. At such a time of adversity he is overwhelmed with *lobha* and *dosa*, committing sins (*akusala*), and thus cannot escape from misery. As for the informed person, however, he perceives the vicissitudes of life

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in accordance with Lokadhamma, with a correct view and makes a note of them in the nature of *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anatta*. He is not overjoyed at the good turns in life nor is he dejected over the bad turns, nor overwhelmed by *lobha* and *dosa*. He has a good chance of doing good deeds and thus gaining merit, especially merit from meditational practice. So in the current life, he is free from mental misery, and when he attains *arahatship* and the state of *nibbāna*, he will be completely free from misery of all kinds. The informed person has such qualities.

ACCORDING TO MANGALA SUTTA

According to Maṅgala sutta, the informed person is not moved by the onslaughts of Lokadhamma, but, on the other hand, the uninformed is greatly agitated. That is the significant difference. So the Buddha said:

Phuṭṭhassa lokadhammehi,
cittam yassa na kampati.
Asokam virajam khemam,
etam maṅgalamuttamam.

“Although attacked by the vicissitudes of life in accordance with Lokadhamma, the mind of the *Arahat*, or the informed person, who is a disciple of the Buddha is not shaken. There is no sorrow; there is no mist of *kilesā* (defilements); there is no danger or horror. That mind which is free from sorrow, *kilesā* or danger, is endowed with sacred auspiciousness of *maṅgala*.”

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We all should meet the onslaughts of Lokadham with the stable mind of an *Arahat*. If one has to endure like an *Arahat*, one must work to become an *Arahat*. If one cannot come up to that stage, one should strive for the stage of *anāgan* or *sakadāgam* or *sotāpan*. In these three stages one cannot be entirely unmoved nor can one be stable in mind because one is not yet completely free from *lobha* and *dosa*. Yet when one has come up to the stage of *sotāpan* one is sufficiently informed in the *dhamma* so that one can practise *vipassanā*, ponder upon the *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anatta* nature of things fairly well and can thus endure the onslaughts of *Lokadham*.

Even if a yogi has not reached the stage of *sotāpan*, he or she can tolerate the onslaughts to a certain extent by the practice of meditation. If the yogi has developed his or her concentration (*samādhi*) further and become aware of the distinctive nature of the phenomenon of *rūpa* and of *nāma* and is convinced that there is nothing attractive in these phenomena, then that yogi will be able to endure the onslaughts of *Lokadham* all the better. If the yogi has developed his or her *samādhi* still further and perceived the different phenomenon separately and in terms of *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anatta*, the endurance will be further strengthened, and relief will be greater.

If still further development of *samadhiñāṇa* can be achieved, and the yogi can perceive the

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incessant changes in the chain of action in the physical and mental parts of existence with equanimity, he or she will have attained *sankhārupekkhañāna*. The yogi will then have acquired serenity and remained unmoved by rewards and punishments of *Lokadham*. There is no occasion for him or her for joy or sorrow. The yogi will be able to endure the onslaughts of either the good parts or the bad parts of *Lokadham* with an unshaken mind. Then the yogi will have the peace and serenity of an *Arahat*, if not as full as an *Arahat*, at least to some extent. If the yogi strives further to develop his or her meditational insight, *vipassanā ñāna*, he or she will reach the ultimate stage of *arahatta magga ñāna* and become an *Arahat*, and will then be endowed with the sacred auspiciousness of *mangala*. We all should strive to reach that ultimate stage of mental stability.

Now we have come to the end of the discourse *Lokadhamma* which was given to you all as a mark of celebration of the New Year. May the audience of this meeting who have respectfully listened to this discourse be able to practice patience and endure the onslaughts of *Lokadhamma* by way of meditation of *Lokadhamma* so that they are totally eradicated and the serene happiness of *nibbāna* prevails!

(Sādhu! Sādhu! Sādhu!)

End of discourse on Lokadhamma. (29-5-1970)

ON GETTING ANGRY

“My friend, who has retired from the world and art angry with this man, tell me what it is you are angry with? Are you angry with the hair of the head, or with the hair of the body, or with the nails, etc.? Or are you angry with the earthy element in the hair of the head and the rest? Or are you angry with the watery element, or with the fiery element, or with the windy element in them? What is meant by a person is only the five groups, the six organs of sense, and the six sense consciousness. With which of these are you angry?”

For a person who has made the above analysis, there is no hold for anger, any more than there is a grain of mustard seed on the point of an awl, or for painting in the sky.”

“Visuddhi Magga”

